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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to obtain current data on practices and procedures in the administration of distance learning programs in the areas of: (1) needs assessment; (2) student demographics; (3) telecourse acquisition procedures and sources; (4) criteria used to evaluate credit telecourses; (5) institutional approval procedures; (6) delivery systems; (7) teaching procedures; (8) marketing; (9) matriculation of students enrolled in distance learning programs; and (10) budgeting procedures. Results are summarized for each of these categories. The data were collected in 1987 from institutions with well-established distance learning programs using the case study approach. Institutions selected for the study were: Cuyahoga Community College and Lorain County Community College in Ohio; Wayne State University, Wayne County Community College, Madonna College, and School Craft College, members of College Cable Channel 56 in Detroit, Michigan; Indiana University, representing the Indiana Higher Education Telecommunications System in the state; Wichita State University in Kansas; and Wilfred Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario. The nine institutions participating in the study represented five four-year and four two-year institutions. (3 references) (Author/GL)

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PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF *ITV DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMS* AT SELECTED INSTITUTIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

A presentation to

AECT

February 3, 1989

Dallas, Texas

by

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Purpose

The purpose of this study was to obtain current data concerning practices and procedures in the administration of a Distance Learning Program in areas of: (1) needs assessment, (2) student demographics, (3) telecourse acquisition procedures and sources, (4) criteria used to evaluate credit telecourses, (5) institutional approval procedures, (6) delivery systems, (7) teaching procedures, (8) marketing, (9) matriculation of distance learners, and (10) budgeting.

Procedure

The data for this study was obtained using the case study approach from post-secondary institutions having a known established Distance Learning Program. The institutions that were selected for this study were Cuyahoga Community College and Lorain County Community College in Ohio; Wayne State University, Wayne County Community College, Madonna College and School Craft College, members of the College Cable Channel 56 in Detroit, Michigan; Indiana University representing the Indiana Higher Education Telecommunications System in Indiana; Wichita State University in Kansas; and Wilfred Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario.

Reporting of Data

Nine institutions participated in this study research that represented five (5) four-year and four (4) two-year institutions. The nine case studies had the following combined demographics:

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Total school population	118,000
Total faculty	5 ,679
Total yrs. experience in DLP	72
Number of students in DLP	9,207
Total budget for DLP	$747,800

1. Needs Assessment. Two of the nine institutions investigated reported conducting a preliminary needs assessment to determine the educational interest of the under-served nontraditional students. Three institutions presumed there was interest for telecourses without conducting a needs assessment. Four cases reported starting a DLP for differentiated reasons.

None of the institutions investigated conducted an institutional needs assessment to determine credit telecourses needs of university, college or department. Neither was there an assessment made of the potential telecourse needs of the potential users, i.e., the students.

There were three reasons most frequently given by the institutions for beginning a credit telecourse program: (1) as a community service; (2) perceived educational needs of the students for the improvement of personal and occupational growth; and (3) to use available technology as an alternate means of delivering instruction by the institution to distance learners.

2. Demographics of telecourse students. Eight of the nine institutions reported having obtained demographic data from their currently enrolled credit telecourse students. No institution attempted to acquire demographic data concerning *potential* distance learners.

In 55-60 percent of the reported cases, the majority of the students were married females in their mid-thirties who have dependents. Some of these students were also single parents. Forty to forty-five percent of the students were married men in their early thirties, employed and worked full time. One institution reported a high of 77 percent of the telecourse students were female and of those students, 71 percent were married. One case study revealed that 56 percent of the telecourse students had previous college or university experience.

3. Selection process of telecourses. In the majority of cases (77%), the coordinator of the credit telecourse program selected telecourses to lease or to purchase that were *parallel* to existing courses. Fact sheets and sample television lectures were distributed to various faculty, chairpersons, division heads and academic deans, vice presidents or president for consideration. Two institutions largely relied upon network offerings and interest generated by individual departments for television selection. One institution reported that a survey was given to participating distance learners to ascertain their needs and wants for additional courses.

Credit telecourses were most frequently obtained from the Adult Learning Services of PBS, Coast Community College, Dallas County Community College, Miami-Dade and Television Ontario. One institution reported obtained credit telecourses through state agencies or consortia.

4. Evaluation procedures. No institution reported having an established criteria to evaluate a telecourse, rather, in all cases, telecourses were evaluated and compared to existing courses. All institutions reported evaluating the entire telecourses, however, including textbooks, student study guides, faculty manuals, test banks and video lectures.

In all case studies, the teaching faculty made the initial evaluation of the telecourse. The

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telecourses were then evaluated by Curriculum and Instruction Committees (22%), a department chairperson or division head (44%), and dean (22%). In one case study, the teaching faculty, Senate and President of the Telecollege shared the evaluation responsibility. In another case, departmental faculty were totally responsible for the evaluation.

5. Approval procedures. In all cases, the final decision to approve the telecourse followed the same format as the evaluation procedure, i.e., 22 of the final decision made by the CIC, 44% were made by the department chairperson, and 22% by the dean of instruction. In one study, all three levels of evaluation, i.e., the teaching faculty, Faculty Senate and President of the college had to be in agreement before approval was made to select a telecourse.

6. Delivery Systems. Participating institutions used a multiple number of systems to transmit the television lectures to the distance learners, including: satellite, networks, ITFS, Low Power UHF and cable television. In most case studies, institutions relied upon PBS and TVO networks for the initial broadcasting of the of telecourses. One institution used The Learning Channel as a primary source of credit telecourses. Where ITFS or cable was available, repeat programming of the televised lectures was made available to the students. Institutions situated in communities having no cable television capabilities, copies of the televised lectures were dubbed and placed in local libraries for additional playbacks.

7. Marketing procedures. All case studies reported that it was essential to market the telecourse program. The degree of success of the distance learning program was largely dependent upon the extensiveness of the market program.

The majority of institutions (8 out of 9) used a marketing mix which included commercial radio and television, PBS or TVO promotion announcements, newspaper advertisements and feature stories, course schedules, flyers, posters, and direct mailings. Three institutions reported *target marketing* was extremely effective, i.e., sending specific course information to the work location of potential students. One case study reported a work-of-mouth campaign was extremely effective where credit telecourse students were asked to market the course to other students. Another case study reported positive results using a well written and illustrated brochure detailing the entire schedule for the year. This brochure was mailed to every household in the county. Extensive advertising in the television section of the local newspaper and/or information in the *TV Guide* also proved to be effective.

There was little similarity found among institutional marketing budgets. Those institutions which reported student enrollments of over 1,000 had a well developed support budget for marketing that ranged from $12,000 to $59,000. Institutions which had low enrollment, e.g., from 66-335 students, were budgeted from zero to $3,300. In the case where no marketing budget existed, small amounts of funds were received from the Continuing Education Department for marketing.

8. Teaching Procedures. Six case studies reported having required orientation sessions. The orientation programs were used to answer students' questions, distributed and explained the course syllabus requirements, lecture schedule, study procedures, etc. One case study reported that since the course was designed for the distant learner, an orientation session on campus would not be held but an additional amount of orientation and procedural material would be provided to the student.

All case studies reported having close contact with students. Seven case studies reported having 4-6 on-campus classes. All case studies reported having contact with students by both

mail and telephone. One case study reported having two, 90-minute telephone conferences with the entire class i lieu of on-campus sessions.

Six institutions reported having a telephone hotline available for course assistance. Three cases reported having students call instructor directly.

All institutions reported telecourse assignments to be the same as or slightly more difficulty and intense than traditional course assignments.

All cases reported examinations were the same as for traditional courses. Three cases reported having students taking examinations at their convenience.

In all cases, students were given extra print material, usually in the form of a student workbook, and supplementary lecture notes.

Three institutions reported using a wrap-around technique, i.e, the local instructor recorded an introduction and closing to the purchased or leased telelecture. Seven of the institutions did not consider this technique necessary nor was there additional time available in the broadcast schedule to permit a wrap-around to be added to the telelecture.

9. Matriculation of students. Seventy-eight percent of the case studies reported not tracking the matriculation of their distance learners. The majority of institutions were aware, however, that nontraditional students *were* matriculating. One institution reported a figure of 70% of the students having completed one telecourse would take another course. Another case study reported 80 percent of their students had matriculated into an on-campus program.

10. The DLP budget. The average budget for all nine case studies was $87,533. The range was from $3,300 to $360,000 while the median budget was $54,000.

No one institution listed the same expenses in their telecourse budget. Most common to all budgets were the telecourse license fees (all institutions reported paying the required fee charged by PBS or the distributor). Six of the case studies paid for marketing from their own budget. Staff budgeting was included in four budgets. Miscellaneous line items included: postage (4), supplies (3), travel (3), printing (2), leasing equipment (1), faculty salary (1), dues and subscriptions (1), and retirement (1).

Six cases reported faculty paid on an *in-load* basis while three cases reported faculty paid on an *over-load* basis. One case study reported offering an option to the teaching faculty; one case reported paying faculty on an over-load basis only during its summer session. One case reported a systematic approach to pay faculty on a base over-load salary, then an additional amount for each student enrolled. At this same institution, faculty were also paid a residual when they produced their own television lectures for the course.

Seven case studies reported never calculating the cost-per-student. The majority of case studies reported it was more important to offer credit telecourses as a community service, to build good will between community and the university or college, and to encourage telecourse students to matriculate into a degree program. Six case studies reported, however, that their telecourse program appeared to be cost effective. One institution reported loosing a slight amount of revenue.

Conclusions

1. Needs assessment. Conducting a needs assessment, prior to the establishment of a DLP, did not determine the success of the program, i.e., a needs assessment was not a predictor of success for those institutions that participated in this study. An institutional needs assessment is also not a predictor of a successful DLP. Rational for developing a DLP is dependent upon the institutional needs. Generally, however, a DLP was developed for reasons

of community service, "perceived" educational needs of nontraditional students and use of existing technology, such as a local cable channel that would cablecast or recablecast ITV programs for the institution.

2. Demographics. Institutions do acquire demographic data from their participating students. The majority of students (55-60%) are married females, in their mid-thirties, having dependents and may be single parents. Forty to forty-five (40-45%) percent are married males students, in their early thirties, are employed and work full time.

3. Selection of Telecourses. There is a tendency to acquire only those credit telecourses that are *parallel* to existing courses found in the approved institutional curricula.

Credit telecourses are more commonly selected from major sources, e.g., ALS, TVO, Coast Community College, Dallas County Community College, etc., than from state agencies or consortia.

4. Evaluation Criteria. Generally, institutions do not use established evaluation criteria, such as that found in Instructional Media by Heinich, Mollenda and Russell or Media for Teachers and Trainers by Streit, Teague and Newhouse, to evaluate credit telecourses. Rather, comparisons are made with existing courses.

Credit telecourses are generally evaluated using an hierarchical approval approach, i.e., faculty, department chairperson or division heads, deans, vice presidents and presidents

5. Approval procedures. The same hierarchical procedure is used for the approval of the credit telecourses.

6. Delivery systems. Institutions will use the local PBS or TVO networks for the initial broadcast of the credit telecourse. Where secondary carriers are available, repeated broadcasts of the credit telecourse are made available to the students.

7. Marketing Program. A strong marketing program is essential for the success of the DLP. The degree of success of the DLP is largely dependent upon the extensiveness of the marketing program, i.e., the larger the marketing budget the greater the likelihood there will be more participating students and a general increase in student population.

There is no single marketing mix that is superior to another as long as the distance learners are kept informed of course offerings, times of registration, etc.

8. Teaching procedures. Generally, a student orientation is given prior to the beginning of the telecourse. However, there appears to be no evidence to support a required orientation and the success rate of the student taking the credit telecourse.

There is inconclusive evidence from this study that there is a need to have distance learners attend on campus sessions while taking the credit telecourse. It would appear independent clustering of students for study sessions or interpersonal communication using a telephone would be sufficient for the learning process.

It appears that the requirements to complete credit telecourse assignments are as difficult as or even slightly more difficult than the traditional course requirements.

It all cases, there was no difference in the type of tests that were administered to the students in the credit telecourse as compared to the tests administered in the traditional on campus courses. There was a difference, however, as to when and where the test had to be

taken. There appears to be more flexibility in the testing procedure in a DLP.

Generally, distance learners are given more supplementary material to compensate for the lack of immediate feedback than are the traditionally taught students.

It appears that the need of a wrap-around technique is not necessary in the DLP nor in the learning process.

9. Student matriculation. Tracking the distance learner to establish matriculation tendencies is not practiced. What appears to be more important is the awareness that once the students have taken one or two credit telecourses, they are more likely to matriculate into a regular college program.

10. The DLP budget. There is no agreement as to the size of the budget for the DLP. It would appear that there is a direct relationship, however, between the size of the budget and the amount spent on marketing the DLP and the size of the student population, i.e., the larger the total budget, the larger the DLP student population.

There is no agreement as to specific line items included in the budget with the exception of the payment for the lease or purchase of the credit telecourse program and the student participation fees.

Generally, faculty are paid using an *in-load* formula. However, some institutions still remain reluctant in paying the in-load salary to faculty due to the *perceived* reduced teaching load and possible low course enrollments.

Generally, it is more important to provide distance learning opportunities to build good will with the community and to provide a community service than to establish a cost DLP. It would appear that there is sufficient enough students who matriculate that would make up an accumulated deficit.

Comparing a DLP to any beginning program or to a business adventure, it takes up to four years to establish a DLP that is cost effective.

11. The success of a DLP. There is evidence to support the notion that for every successful Distance Learning Program, there has been a change agent within the hierarchy of the administration with sufficient influence that it had a direct and positive effect on the diffusion process of the innovation.

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Author Abstract

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